1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Clare

443 morning. To dress, snatch a cup of tea, and bless himself
484 takes only a moment. Usually he has arranged for companionship, and he and his neighbors drive their beasts along the roads together. Company makes the night less lonely and the handling of the animals easier. Driving them is a skilled task against the dangers of the road, both natural and eerie. The men hope to reach the site of the fair before daybreak. They want to arrive in time to find a "good pitch," as they call it. They want to take their stand in the drawn-up lines of men and beasts where buyers are most likely to notice them. His pitch taken, each man stands over his beasts, ready for the inspection of buyers, careful that his beasts do not wander off or get mixed up with the others.

443 As dawn breaks, the buyers arrive. They are nearly always
438 cattle dealers and big farmers. Only occasionally are they local men. One can recognize them as they hurry about, [291] businesslike, wearing trench coat, bowler, and leggings. The costume is practically a uniform with them, quite different from the drab coats and boots of the countrymen. They carry chalk or scissors and pencils and a notebook to mark the beasts of their choice and record their purchases.

In the good days of high prices, as during the World War, the buyers arrive even before dawn and buy by lantern light. All the good beasts of the fair may be gone by the time the sun comes up. On occasions of little demand, however, the buyers have time to look about carefully and make the exhaustive tests of quality that long experience has convinced them are the secret of commercial success.

443 The procedure of choice, bargaining, and sale is as un-
437 changing a ritual as any church provides. The buyer — dealer or farmer — strolls unconcernedly along the lines of farmers and their beasts. Here and there he greets an acquaintance. But he is appraising the animals all the while. Rigid custom forbids his breaking in on a bargain already

2: Campbell B.E-5 (1934-1935) 1937 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Mayo

PLATE XLII

142
291

1. The cailleach built close to the fireplace. Fallmore, Co. Mayo.

2. Gable-chimney house. Belmullet, Co. Mayo.

342

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

462 tional social life. The boy's first duties, as soon as
593 he can speak and walk, are to run on petty errands
857 to neighbours and near-by friends. Until he is seven and passes through first communion, his place is in the house with the women, and he shares the same bed with his sisters. After that year, he leaves his mother's apron strings, and is slowly drawn into men's ways; he is thrown more and more with his elder brothers and sleeps with them henceforward. In remote regions he takes off girl's clothing for [291] the first time; for girl's clothing has protected [789] him from the fairies, they say. Both socially and economically he is becoming a male, but his male status is still very little. By the time he is ten or eleven, he is brought home from school when needed to take part in the important agricultural work of the year. But not until he passes confirmation and leaves school, usually at the same time, does he take on full men's work and assume men's clothing. Even then, as he reaches maturity, and takes on more and more the heavy tasks of the farm, he never escapes his father's direction. Only when his father makes over the farm to him, at death or at his own marriage, can he assume command, and with it full adult status.

Economic apprenticeship is thus a process of conditioning within the family. But there is no separation of economic and non-economic spheres. The father's direction of the enterprise coincides with his dominant, controlling role as parent and

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

142
291
243

CORN HARVEST

[Frontispiece]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

individual ownership they have by no means entirely collapsed. The principle of service, of mutual aid within the local family groups, survives; the element of competition is reduced to a minimum. Though the old social laws have been "abolished" by acts of parliament, such external decrees could destroy only the superficial features and hardly touched the minds in which these customs were rooted. The primary unit of land division—the townland—is still a very real thing; and as the townland retains its Gaelic name even in the districts of Dublin and Belfast, so there survives beyond the city's influence the social fabric of the townland community. Reeves and Joyce have argued that the careful subdivision of Irish land points to the existence of a considerable settled population in remote antiquity, and recent archæological research supports this view. There are no less than 62,205 townlands in the country; their size, which varies from curiosities of less than an acre to large tracts of moorland of 1,000 acres, averages 325 acres.

The townlands in turn group themselves into baronies corresponding to the petty kingdoms of old. Writers tell us that even into the 19th century one barony could be easily distinguished from another by the dresses peculiar to each. Thus there were the dark blue and damson of Cork and Waterford, the grey of Kerry and the blue of Galway. A traveller in 1830 remarked wisely that "such peculiarities frequently point out the natural divisions of a country in more important matters than dress": they are an index to regional diversity. The distinctive features of particular districts are well illustrated in the case of "the Irish Flanders," the isolated tract in Co. Wexford comprising the baronies of Bargy and Forth; while nothing could reveal the separateness of some island communities better than the heaviest punishment meted out to offenders in Rathlin or Clear I.: it consisted of "banishment to Ireland."

Enough has been said to suggest that the traditions of the Irish countryside are of long standing, and that many strains in those traditions are not only of Celtic but of pre-Celtic antiquity. Before we consider some of the relics of the

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Aran Islands

Plate V.

285
516
291
351

MAKING A SKIB
INISHERE, ARAN
CREEL IN GROUND BEHIND

[facing p. 12]

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

former centuries animal hides and skins figured prominently, and it is not uncommon in the west to see cured skins of wild and domestic animals used as floor-coverings. No doubt in earlier days skins and furs were worn, but in modern times raw-hide has been employed only for shoes such as the "pampooties" worn by the Aran Islanders. These have the advantage that they do not damage the frail curraghs, just as the Islandman's headgear is the knitted Tam o' Shanter which the wind cannot blow off. A century ago one might have seen a dried sheep-skin serving as a window, or even a cowhide used as a door-hanging. Sheep- and goat-skins still find their uses as back-protectors (Chapter 16), in the making

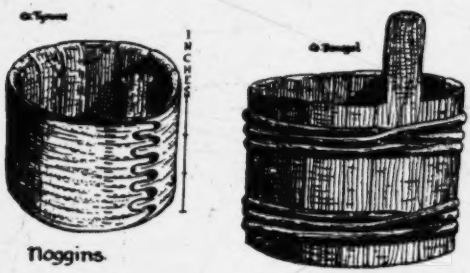

Fig. 69.

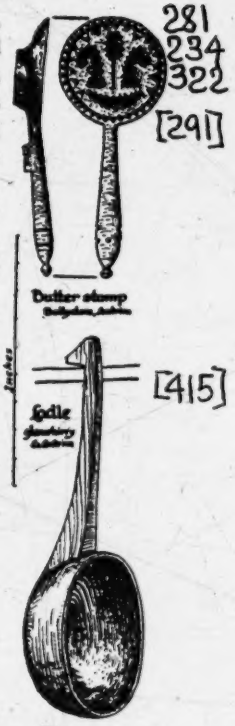

Fig. 70.

of thongs for flails, and especially in providing bottoms for various trays and sieves, the only difference between them being that the sieve-skin is perforated.

The skin, scraped and dried, is wrapped or sewn on to a rim of ash or bog-fir (Fig. 71), and a good deal of skill is required to stretch it on without a wrinkle. These trays are called wights or wechts in the north-east: the peat wight is for carrying turf to the house and the corn wight for pouring corn into a sack. The winnowing tray sometimes has small perforations to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken on to a cloth. A windy spot was selected for the purpose, and numerous "Shelling Hills" get their name from this operation. The perforations, about one-eighth of an inch

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

portance when there are several persons to be examined, for, if kept waiting, they will most probably either slip off or refuse to be measured. 125

(A). *Hair and Eye Colour.*—In the obtaining of these data the methods, cards, and tables were precisely the same as those used in the expedition to Aran, to the report of which the reader is referred for particulars.

(B). *Measurements.*—These were, with the exceptions hereafter mentioned, the same as previously. The head circumference and external binocular breadth, not having proved satisfactory, were omitted, and for them were substituted:—(1). The upper face length measured from the naso-frontal suture to the separation between the central incisors at the gum. (2). The height sitting. This, though it is certainly a most valuable measurement, for which reason it was inserted in the observation schedule, was found to be altogether unsuited for field work, as it could only be taken in a few exceptional cases, so I had reluctantly to abandon it. (3). Auriculo-mental radius, measured with the Dublin craniometer, from the centre of the ear-hole to the point of the chin.

(C). *Instruments used.*—These consisted of Garson's anthropometer, a sliding measure for the limbs, Broca's compas d'épaisseur and compas glissière and a Chesterman steel tape. Instead of the fixed metallic Cunningham craniometer, the new portable pattern of the same instrument (made specially for field work by Messrs. Robinson, of Grafton-street, Dublin) was taken, and stood the test well, being quite as rigid as the older pattern when set up, and, as it is made of boxwood, much lighter. Its portability is a great advantage, as by the removal of one screw-bolt the whole instrument may be disjointed and carried in the coat-pocket. A set of Snellen test-types for accurately estimating the keenness of eyesight was also taken, and proved to be very useful. 126

The whole, with note-books and observation forms, were carried, fitted in a canvas knapsack, and, as they weighed under ten pounds, were light enough to be easily carried even in long walks over very rough ground.

(D). *Remarks on the Methods employed.*—There were several difficulties experienced in the making of the observations this year, due partly to the visit being made at harvest time when most of the people were engaged in the fields, partly to local causes, the principal of which were the shyness of the people, the manner in which the hair of most of the women was covered by the shawl which was drawn more closely on the approach of a stranger, and the closeness with 124 [609] [291] [302]

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

272 every meal; it is made extremely strong, and, as elsewhere, is the cause of a good deal of dyspepsia.

273 Alcoholic liquors are not much drunk, as illicit distilling has altogether ceased in this district.

264 An average working day's dietary is as follows:—Breakfast: tea, and home made bread. Dinner: fish, or eggs and potatoes. Supper; the same as breakfast.

291 177 4. *Clothing.*—The homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics still constitute the bulk of the clothing worn, but are being superseded by imported slop clothes of inferior quality; and the dress on working days is nondescript and often ragged. On Sundays and holidays the proportion of imported clothing seen is greater, and the homespun suits are sometimes very different from the old types, being imitations in cut of the imported goods. The dress of the men consists of a shirt of thick white or chocolate-coloured homespun, with a rather high plain band collar, and large bone buttons, or, in some cases, it is made of imported flannel, purchased in Clifden or Westport. The single or double-breasted waistcoat, with the large collar-flaps buttoned back, is, when worn, generally put on inside the bawneen, or white flannel coat, instead of outside, as was formerly the case.

Trousers are of homespun or corduroy.

A thick comforter is worn about the neck by many, even in very warm weather.

For head-dress, soft felt hats and caps of various shapes, all imported, are now in general use, the old home-made flat, blue bonnet being but little worn, except by the older men. It may be most frequently seen in Westquarter and Inishshark.

291 The men wear thick worsted stockings of dyed or "natural" wool, and very stout boots of native make, as a regular part of their daily attire, but the women and children go bare-footed, except on Sundays and holidays. The dress of the women shows as great changes as that of the men; it is of the well-known Connemara type.

The head is covered by a red kerchief, or small shawl, often a plaid, but so far as seen never by a "mutch" (a cap with white frill). Over the shoulders a small red tartan shawl is folded, half hiding a jacket, or bodice, of homespun, or imported woollen stuff; the petticoat is short, and dyed a bright red with madder, and sometimes trimmed with a few rows of black braid, and a wide check apron is usually worn. Some women, on Sundays, wear the old large blue cloak with hood and double cape.

The small boys wear the kilt-like frock of white, red, or brown

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

homespun, buttoned up the back, and reaching well below the knees, until they reach the age of ten or eleven years. The dyes for the homespuns are obtained from plants growing on the islands; the orange used for stockings being got from a lichen (*Ramalina scopulorum*); black and brown from the purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*); blue from a small cruciferous plant; and red usually from imported madder, but sometimes from water-lily roots. Alum is used as mordant.

5. *Dwellings.*—A house consists of a kitchen, and one or two bedrooms; and it is, as a rule, built of dry stones without any mortar, though this is used afterwards for stopping chinks, and plastering the walls internally. Most of the houses are not whitewashed, with the exception of a belt around the small windows, but lime-washed houses are becoming more common than formerly. The house has two doors, front and back, both opening directly into the kitchen; and the windows are situated only on the front of the house; they are of very small size, and seldom made to open; yet, often, small as they are, they are nearly filled up, so as to leave only from six inches to a foot square of glazed surface. The chimneys and fireplaces are of the usual type found throughout the rural districts of Ireland, except that in some cases the chimney, after rising perpendicularly nearly to the top of the wall, turns outwards and opens as a square hole in the gable. The roof is straw thatch, laid on over "scraws" of grass turf, and held down by a net-work of sougans (straw ropes), to the ends of which heavy stones or long pieces of timber are attached. The gable of the house is stepped, so that the thatch when laid on does not project over the end wall, and is sealed down, to prevent water getting under it at this part, by a plastering of clay.[1] The thatch is put on fresh every year, a new layer being laid over the older ones, until the lowermost layer is thoroughly saturated with smoke, and quite rotten, when the whole is stripped off and used as manure. The floor is of beaten clay in the kitchen, but the bedrooms are sometimes boarded. The most expensive material used in building a house is wood, which is very scarce, and is usually obtained from drift wood, washed up after a storm, in which way large beams often reach the islands. It is owing to this scarcity of material, and the people having to build their own houses, that there are so few outbuildings or cattle-sheds, and that the dwelling-houses are so small. The furniture is scanty, and testifies to the poverty of the people. A few

[1] "Houses thatched in this manner are called on the west coast *tighthe croithte*, i. e. 'shaken houses,' in contrast to the *tighthe fuaighte* 'stitched houses,' in which the thatch is tied on by ropes or cords."—REV. E. O'GROWNEY.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

113 OFFICIAL:

"Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland."—Dublin, 1846.

"Memoirs of the Geological Survey of Ireland. Explanatory Memoir of Sheets 73, 74, 83, 84."—Dublin, 1876.

WILDE, LADY FRANCESCA:

"Ancient Legends, Mystic Charms, and Superstitions of Ireland. with Sketches of the Irish Past."—London, 1887.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES VIII. AND IX.

PLATE VIII.

142 FIG. 1.—James Joyce, aged 48 years, No. 5, Middlequarter.

●291 FIGS. 2 AND 3.—Anthony Lavelle, aged 35 years, No. 2, Knock.

FIG. 4.—Group of men, Inishbofin.

Taken in order from left to right, the names are, respectively:—

Back row.—John Burke, boatwright; Michael Halloran, king of Shark; John Tierney, postman; Mick Kerrigan, weaver; Redmond Toole, fisherman.

Front row.—Martin Baker, John Malia (or Malley), Ned Burke, Redmond Toole, all fishermen.

FIG. 5.—Group of women, Westquarter, Inishbofin.

Taken in the same order as the other group, the names are—Margaret Ward, Nancy Browne (first cousins), Nelly Holloran, Mary Holloran (daughter of last), Brigid Concannon.

PLATE IX.

4/2 FIG. 1.—Quern still in use in Middlequarter, Inishbofin.

283 FIG. 2.—Spinning wheel in Middlequarter.

296 FIG. 3.—Method of washing clothes, Church Lough, Knock.

10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Inishbofin

142
291

[End Plate A]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

Dinner.—Tea and soda-bread, or fish and potatoes. 262

Supper.—Fish and potatoes, with buttermilk as a beverage, or 264 stirabout and milk.

In the mountainous parts, potatoes and stirabout form, with tea and boxty, the larger part of the dietary. In this region also the poorer families do not usually take more than two meals a day during the winter months.

Butter, cheese, and eggs are but very little used, the eggs being [439] exported, and in some remote parts sometimes bartered to the small [437] dealers for tea, sugar, or tobacco, instead of being sold for money.

In many parts a good deal of poteen is consumed, as illicit dis- 273 tilling, though much less common than formerly, still prevails to a considerable extent.

4. *Clothing.*—When seen in their holiday dress the people appear 291 to be well dressed, and almost over-clothed; but the everyday working-dress is, among the poorer part of the population, often of a very non-descript, not to say ragged, character.

At first sight there does not seem to be much homespun worn, but on closer inspection a great deal of it appears to be still in use, but to be made up in modern style. It is usually dyed blue, but a good deal of it is a natural grey made by mixing black and white wool, and which, as it does not fade, is much in use. The costume of the men varies much; the old swallow-tailed coat with the metal buttons is now seldom seen, being replaced by more modern patterns. The trousers are either homespun or corduroy. Hats and caps of all [439] shapes are worn; they are usually purchased in Belmullet from local [444] shopkeepers who import them. Many of the men, on working days, wear shirts of a thick, white, homespun flannel.

The men of Inishkea still retain a distinctive attire, their dress being composed of a navy-blue homespun, of which shirt, vest, and trousers are made; many wear a loose blouse or frock of the same material, which they prefer to "shop cloth," as they say it is warmer, wears longer, and stands sea water better; it is certainly more picturesque.

A great deal of second hand clothing is sold on fair days to the [443] poorer class of people by "Cheap Jacks," who dispose of their wares by a sort of Dutch auction.

The men wear boots in every-day dress, but the women and children do so only on Sundays, market-days, and holidays. It is a common custom for women going to market in Belmullet to walk barefooted, carrying their boots in their baskets until they reach the outskirts of

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

291 the town, where they sit down by the roadside, and put on their boots and stockings, taking them off again when starting for home.

The old-fashioned frock or kilt-shaped garment, made of red or grey homespun, and buttoned up the back, is still worn by boys up to twelve years of age.

The dress of the women is on the whole less changed than that of the men. Many of the elderly women wear the white-frilled cap, others have a small red kerchief tied under the chin. Over the shoulders a shawl of tartan or other striking pattern is folded, but this is not so frequently of a bright red, as in other districts, as the darker colours seem to be more in favour; beneath the shawl is a boddice of some dark material. The petticoat is short, but is only occasionally the typical red homespun of the western peasant. It is often grey, or dyed purple, blue, or some other bright colour, and is sometimes ornamented by a few rows of black braid. Aprons of check are much worn. Many of the older women wear the heavy blue cloak with cape and hood on Sundays and holidays. The younger women to a large extent copy modern fashions on festive occasions, but the result is not happy, as their taste in colours is curious, and they certainly look better in native costume.

286 A great variety of homespuns are made in the district, there being several weavers who turn out coarse flannel, tweeds, and friezes, some of which are very good specimens of hand-loom work. The dyes 386 are nearly all imported, indigo and the made-up aniline dyes being most used. Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), which was at one [824] time pretty generally employed for this purpose, is now only used for dying stockings.

5. *Dwellings.*—The habitations of the people present considerable 342 variety, some being extremely poor, others of a fairly good class. The description given below applies solely to the houses of the people of the rural parts, and not to Belmullet (which is a cleanly and well-built little town, composed almost entirely of good-slated houses of two stories) nor to the houses of the proprietors or large holders.

Of late years there has been much improvement in the style of dwelling, but few indeed of the old turf cabins remain; while the semi-subterranean huts, some of which were inhabited in 1841, have become altogether extinct.

The *Parliamentary Gazetteer* (1846) describes the majority of dwellings as being built partly of stone and partly of turf, and consisting of only one or at most two rooms.

An average dwelling now is built of stone, sometimes dry, at others

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

BROWNE—*Ethnography of the Mullet, Inishkea, & Portacloy.* 649

SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE:
"Oiöe Cloinne Lir. The Fate of the Children of Lir." (Dublin, 1883.)

TROTTER.—"Walks through Ireland."

WARREN, R.—"Birds observed breeding on the coasts of Sligo and Mayo." "The Irish Naturalist," vol. iv. p. 180. (Dublin, 1895.)

NOTE.—The late Dean Lyons, of Kilmore, the well-known archæologist, had written the history of Erris, but died without publishing it. The MS. is now missing, but was until lately in the possession of the Rev. James Durcan of Bangor, Erris.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES.

(*From Photographs, by* C. R. & J. M. BROWNE.)

PLATE XV.

1. Group of men at Muingcrena, Mullet. Taken in order from, left to right, the names are:—
Back row—Patrick Toole, James M'Cormack, Patrick Padden James Dixon, No. 50; J. Lavelle.
Front row—Francis Coyle, No. 47; Hugh Cafferky, No. 46; Anthony Lavelle, No. 51; H. Joyce.

2, 3. Anthony Dunleavy, aged 60 years, Emlybeg, No. 13.

4. William Gaughan, aged 28 years, Emlybeg, No. 12.

5. —— ——, ——, No. 41; Richard Cane, No. 40. Both from Fallmore, a small village at the southern extremity of the peninsula of the Mullet.

PLATE XVI.

6. Group of men from Iniskea.

7, 7*a*. Michael Cawley, aged 41 years; South Iniskea, No. 4.

8. Philip Lavelle, aged 33 years; North Iniskea, No. 1.

9, 9*a*. Patrick Cawley, aged 40 years; South Iniskea, No. 3.

PLATE XVII.

10. Group of men and boys at Portacloy. The figure on the extreme right shows the dress of the younger boys.

11, 12. William Bourne, aged 33 years, No. 34, and —— Bourne, both from Portacloy.

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

142
● 291

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2 3 4

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[End. Plate A]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

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9 (a)

7 (a)

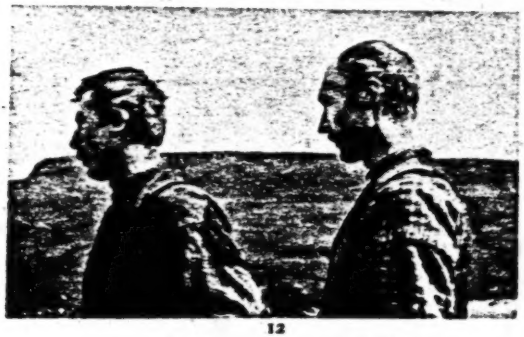
[End Plate B]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
Kilmore

142
291

10

11



12

[End Plate C]

000 problems. The range of commodities
433 available on the island is restricted. But the farms are similar to those in Connemara, and the fishing—especially for lobsters—may in some years be distinctly profitable. Peat is still available and no coal is imported. Once the peat is used up, it is hard to maintain existence on these remote islands. And if the population diminishes to very small numbers, its very maintenance may become precarious or impossible as on Inishark (p. 208). Inishbofin's present population is maintained partly
434 by the help of various government
657 schemes, by the remittances of relatives,
or—in comparatively few instances—
167 by periodic spells of residence in England to make money as laborers or domestic servants. Incidentally, the
[191] people are entirely English-speaking: the Irish speech was lost almost 60 years ago.

291 Home spinning and weaving of fab-
438 rics is now extinct. In 1893, it was noted that most of the clothing was
[286] made from "homespun and home-dyed woollen fabrics" but that "imported shop clothes of inferior quality" were replacing them.[8] Inishbofin people have no longer the homespun clothes still worn by the people of the Aran islands in Galway Bay: only one old woman was seen in the traditional red skirt (or petticoat) dyed with imported madder. Clothes are now bought in the local shops, or during occasional visits to Clifden, which is "town" to the islanders, or to Galway, or from mail order houses in Dublin. Even a journey
484 to Clifden involves seven miles in a hooker and seven miles along a road with no public conveyance, and Galway
[491] is a further 50 miles by bus as the light railway was closed in 1925.

[8] C. R. Browne: The Ethnography of Inishbofin and Inishark, County Galway, Proc. Royal Irish Acad., 3rd series, Vol. 3, 1893–96, p. 354.

[p. 203(B)]
[Text continues on p. 204(B)]

657 erality. Houses, farms more than twice the size of those normal before the days of the Congested Districts Board, doles to those needing them from November to April, subsidized schemes of building walls that seem in places scarcely necessary, and no direct taxation—all contribute to the general social welfare. In addition the family allowances and old age pensions help in many households, but these are general state benefits. During the winter many householders are short of money, once the money for the stock has been spent.[20]

167 Second, emigration has been of vast benefit to the community; money comes
434 in to most of the homes from America[21] or Britain, or both. And emigration has made possible the making of farms which, with the use of commonage, can hardly support a family in comfort but can give basic sustenance; though, as more and more farms are united, some men will prosper, especially those who fish as well as farm.

443 Third, it is regrettable that the lack
489 of commercial facilities means that eggs, poultry, butter, and other produce cannot be sold; in many parts of Ireland the sale of eggs to grocers and milk to

[273] [20] The consumption of stout at the only inn averages eight barrels a week in summer, but only
[804] three barrels a week in winter. The standard content of a barrel is 256 pints.
[21] Many of the children are dressed in Amer-
● [291] ican clothes.

[p. 209(A)]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

PLATE 4

●291
243

"Lashing" rye, Aran Islands. Note the woven belt (criss) supporting the hand-woven tweed trousers.

[facing p.49]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 6

243
516
291
412

1. Shearing oats with the toothed sickle, Co. Antrim.

291
342
351
243
412

2. Threshing oats with flails, Co. Antrim.

[FACING p. 97]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Antrim

PLATE 8

492
493
342
291
285

1. Slide-car with peat-kish. Glens of Antrim.

492
493
417

2. Wheel-car, Glens of Antrim.

[Facing p. 113]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Fermanagh
County Antrim

PLATE 9

314
516
493
291 ●
412

1. Cutting turf (underfooting) in a Co. Fermanagh bog.

314
417
493
291

2. Building a peat stack, Co. Antrim.

[FACING p.144]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6
County Meath

PLATE 10

314
291
[412]

1. Spreading mud turf with long-handled shovel, Co. Meath.

[516]

2. "Running" the spread turf.

[FACING p. 145]

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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as the work of specialists (Fig. 71). The pampooties of the Aran Islands deserve mention here. Made of calfskin, but formerly of sealskin,[1] these one-piece shoes were once doubtless widely worn and have kept their hold in Aran because of their suitability for wet rocks and frail curraghs. The rivlins of Scotland and the Highland *bròg*an were very similar and I have seen rawhide shoes of the same type from Norway and the Pyrenees. They all have the hair outside and are secured by lacing back and front.

The wight serves both to hold corn, in filling a sack for instance, and to convey peats from the stack to the fireside: perforated it becomes a meal-sieve (boran) for sifting the skins (seeds) from oatmeal, or a buttermilk sieve for taking out the last grains of butter from the churn. The winnowing tray or dallan is a larger version, and it, too, may be perforated to allow the wind to pass through as the corn is shaken out on to a spread cloth. There are, up and down Ireland, many bold windy Shilling Hills where the 'shellings' (husks) were, in past times, separated from the grain in this way (Pl. 7).

This brings us to the flail and its 'hanging' (the mid-kipple, hooden, gad, middling, or tug) which was commonly a thong of cow-, horse-, sheep, or goat-skin, though sometimes of rabbit- or eel-skin or a cord of flax. The flail, the proverbial 'stick-and-a-half', consists of a three to four feet long helve or hand-staff, usually made of ash, and a shorter beater, swingle or souple of hazel or holly. There are two principal methods of 'hanging' the parts together. In one variety, the tie passes through two leather caps lashed over the ends (Fig. 72, 1). This appears to be a variant of the common English flail-hanging, where, however, the cap is made of steamed ash or yew and there is no linking piece. Its distribution in Ireland, down the east coast, points to derivation from England. Modifications, occurring as far west as Donegal (Fig. 72, 1*a*, *b*), have the linking thong passing through a hole made either in the helve or in the beater. Kevin Danaher states that the capped flail is characteristic of central Europe: it is believed to have first appeared in north France in the early Middle Ages.[2] The

[1] O'Flaherty, *H'Iar Connaght*, 59 (footnote).
[2] *J.C.H. and A. Soc.*, 60 (1955), 6–14.

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Introduction

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INIS BEAG is a fictitious name for one of the many inhabited islands of the Irish Gaeltacht.[1] It is a rocky, barren protuberance in the ocean, buffeted constantly by wind and storm, where 350 hardy people eke out a meager existence. This tiny island is renowned not only for the distinctive folk culture possessed by its inhabitants, but for its numerous, well-preserved antiquities which attest to at least 5000 years of almost continuous human habitation, and its great beauty of land and seascape. During the past 150 years, first scientists, then writers, and more recently film, radio, and television producers have visited Inis Beag, and their many works have served to familiarize the world with the culture, albeit romanticized, of the islanders. As a result of literary publicity, which commenced in the first decade of this century, increasing numbers of tourists have been drawn to Inis Beag over the years. The cultural forms which are most publicized and attract the most attention from tourists are the traditional garb of the folk, their skill in rowing the famed canoe, called *curach*, the manner in which they manufacture soils and grow in them a variety of crops, and their Gaelic speech.

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My wife and I were introduced to Inis Beag during a short visit to Ireland in 1955, when we viewed the island from the nearby coast and talked of its cultural past and present with scholars in Dublin, Cork, and Galway. Between 1955 and 1958, we immersed ourselves in writings pertaining to Irish history and culture, and during the three summer months of the latter year we visited several peasant communities on the mainland and three islands, including Inis Beag, of the Gaeltacht. We made plans to come back to Inis Beag as soon as possible to undertake research, and in 1959 and 1960 we were able to spend the greater part of a year there, during which time we visited briefly on three occasions a neighboring island—Inis Thiar[2]—and several institutions on the mainland to conduct library and other research. We returned eight times to Inis Beag and Dublin for

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[1] The Gaeltacht—areas in which 25 to 100 percent of the inhabitants speak Irish—embraces portions of 12 northern, western, and southern counties and a population of approximately 600,000 people (Freeman 1960:166).

[2] In Gaelic, Inis Thiar (also a fictitious name) means Western Isle, and Inis Beag is translated Little Isle.

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Figure 5. Improving a garden with compost unloaded on seaweed

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654 the agent are providing seed potatoes and overseeing the construction of fences, fields, reservoirs, and outbuildings subsidized by the government.

241 The average sized farm of a fourth has approximately half of its acreage in quarter- and half-acre gardens; the other half is divided fairly evenly between larger plots containing indigenous soils used for grazing and those enclosing lime-
[654] stone pavement, or "crags." Gardens are smaller in size because subsidies for their
[436] manufacture are paid according to the quarter-acre—7 pounds and 10 shillings when a potato crop is grown—and a field this size can be converted into a garden comfortably in the period of a year. Most landholders plant from a half-acre to a full acre of potatoes yearly, and it is estimated that a quarter-acre will produce,
[433] under normal weather conditions, nearly four tons of "spuds." According to the agricultural agent, the use of human manure as a fertilizer accounts for such a
[437] high yield. The amount of potatoes consumed depends, of course, on the size of the householder's family, but many farmers export surpluses the following summer before new spuds are harvested.

"Improving" refers both to developing a new garden and to enriching an old one with compost (see Fig. 5). New plots usually are manufactured in areas containing indigenous soils, so as to lessen the labor required. If a garden is to be "laid" on pavement, a much fissured area is chosen so that adequate drainage is afforded. The plot is leveled by removing protruding stones with crowbar and sledge hammer (not by throwing a huge boulder from above the head, as shown in the aforementioned film), and fissures are filled with small rocks to the extent
[333] that soil components added later will not filter down. Large stones are placed in
[654] fences which surround the field, for which the government pays the farmer, or farmers, involved in their construction 2 pounds for each 22 yards raised 4 feet. Writers describing the local milieu seldom fail to mention that fences are numer-

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Figure 7. Harvesting spuds near the lake below Terrace Village

seed is thrown out by hand and the top soil turned over by spade to cover it, a task often shared by a man and his offspring. The farmer who wishes to use a plot only for growing hay usually will seed it during the spring after it has yielded spuds and will not permit animals to graze on it until it has been cut and the hay stored. No further seeding is required after the initial one, even though ten years may elapse before potatoes once again are planted. 246 221

The tools employed in cutting and stacking hay are the sickle, called a "reaping hook," the scythe, the pitchfork, and the rake. Most are imported, but a few men own handmade rakes whose parts are wooden and fitted together. The farmers substitute wide brimmed felt hats for their usual caps when haying, and do so again a month later when "pulling" rye; the hat is purported to be cooler than the cap and affords protection to the neck of the wearer when he bends over for long spells under a hot sun. Many folk claim that cutting hay is the most strenuous of their jobs on land or sea, but the men work slowly and rest often, just as they do when engaged in other arduous tasks, some of which appear to the outsider to demand a greater output of energy than manipulating a sickle or scythe. Once cut, hay is raked into parallel rows across the field for drying, then formed into cocks, known as "saving the hay," by hand or using a rake, "fork," or scythe. It is possible to stack hay into cocks 24 hours after cutting it, then to transport it to barns and outbuildings after a like period of time (see Fig. 8), but rain and the press of other duties can prolong the operation for as long as two weeks. Seeds for autumn planting are shaken from the hay on the floor of the storage building before the crop is stacked away to furnish winter fodder. 246 [293] [461] [343]

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Figure 8. Transporting hay to an outbuilding

249 Those islanders who dwell in thatched houses or who own other buildings which are thatched grow rye, as do a few farmers who use it as fodder. It is planted in recently dug potato fields at the same time as grass and is ready for harvesting the next August. Rye for thatching is pulled rather than cut, and compressed into [342] small bundles which are propped against fences for drying. Pulling is preferred because grass and weeds can be separated out, and the roots will furnish friction [343] to keep the bundles from slipping when they are placed on the roof later. After drying, the bundles are carried to barns or outbuildings to be flailed, winnowed, and stored until used a month or two afterward. Flailing is done by striking the tops of the bundled plants against a stone placed a foot from an indoor wall, in such a way that the seeds are separated and collected at the base of the wall. Later the grain is spread on a flagging and winnowed by allowing handfuls of seed to [246] fall to the rock surface so that wind blows away the chaff. Rye used as fodder is planted with grass and cut when "green" at the same time that hay is cut, and is handled in almost the same way as the latter.

Care of Livestock

175 The export of fish, kelp, pigs, cattle, and sheep accounted for 90 percent
434 of the income of Inis Beag folk in 1893, as reported by the Congested Districts
437 Board. The sale of cattle and sheep ranked last, for at that time indigenous soils
[311] were not adequate either in extent or grass yield to support many livestock, and
178 fields on the terraces were used mostly for farming. But over the past 70 years
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Figure 9. Launching a curach *from the strand in stormy weather*

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177 they taken fish which eventually would have found their way into island nets, but
178 they have destroyed with their trawls spawning beds of certain fish and captured
[648] lines and nets set out many miles in the ocean by Inis Beag crews. Another reason
[133] why fish have become scarce is that shifting currents or other related factors have caused some fish, especially mackerel, to bypass the region. Other coastal areas of Ireland from which fish seldom were taken in quantity in the past now are thriving, and some islanders look hopefully to the future when once again migra-
[132] tory routes will change and bring the fish back. However, even if fish were more
[601] available today, it would be difficult to fish for them from *curach* for part of the year because of worsening weather conditions. Storms have increased in number and severity during the winters, and even the summers which once were relatively "calm" are punctuated with long spells of "rough" weather which makes going out in the canoes risky (see Fig. 9). Finally, a seldom admitted factor also must be
[829] considered—the indolence of the men. Aged fishermen assert that sufficient fish are still available to make serious fishing a highly profitable occupation, but that young men have been "spoiled" by government benevolence and are unwilling to undergo the hardships entailed—"Why rise before dawn and row all day when you can draw the dole?" During 1959, those crews which fished the most averaged between 50 and 60 pounds per man for the season.

684 Whereas the efforts of the Irish Free State and the Republic to improve
228 Inis Beag living standards have been directed mostly toward stimulating agriculture and animal husbandry, those of the government before 1922 were focused on making fishing a more productive enterprise. The Congested Districts Board intro-

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264 fork. It is not unusual for a man to eat six or eight large spuds at a sitting, and
415 the pot used to boil potatoes for a large family is piled high indeed. Spuds also
[231] are fed to cattle, poultry, and pets. The diet of families which are most prosperous,
[184] keep tourists, or whose members are acculturated is more varied than the diet that I have just described, and these families utilize the shops more than is usual.

164 The excessive intake of carbohydrates, particularly by children, coupled
516 with the almost complete absence of dental hygiene, has resulted in universal
[262] tooth decay among the folk. Many people in their twenties and thirties already wear false teeth, and toothache is the most common physical ailment. My wife and I discovered but one adult who cleans her teeth, and she only once a week with
[753] a cloth and toothpaste. The islanders eschew use of the toothbrush for several reasons: some believe that bad teeth are inherited or decay is a contagious disease, and nothing can be done to prevent deterioration once it has set in; others equate decay with the common cold, a natural affliction suffered by everyone which must be accepted fatalistically (and masochistically); while still others regard the tooth-
[624] brush as an English innovation or its use as an upper class affectation—"If I used one they would say I had fancy ideas."—to be shunned on these grounds. A story whose plot was laid in an island in the region of Inis Beag appeared in the *Saturday Evening Post*, and was illustrated with photographs taken in Inis Thiar. The Dublin model who portrayed the heroine in local attire was recognized as an outsider by the folk who viewed the pictures because her teeth were white and even.

Clothing

291 The term traditional applied to the much publicized Inis Beag garb refers
177 to the homespun vests and trousers and blue woolen shirts of the men, the ankle-
178 length red and blue woolen skirts and a type of shawl of the women, and the
[184] cowskin shoes and woven belts worn by many men but only a few women. Some of these articles of wear are shared with peasants of the region, or were in the past and thus are vestigial; others are unique to Inis Beag; and all are in the process of being replaced by mass produced mainland attire. Of 111 adult males in Inis Beag, 11 have given up the local dress, as have 9 of the 85 adult females. Most of these 20 have returned to the island from having spent time on the mainland or abroad, and as a matter of prestige have chosen to retain the foreign costume. Practically all of the young men past school age who have not been away dress traditionally, but none of the women between ages 18 and 29 do; the youngest women who wear the red or blue skirt are of the latter age.

294 Although most clothing worn by the islanders is tailored locally, everything
286 but the trousers and vests of the men are made from imported materials. Clothing is tailored from cloth woven by the island weaver from Inis Beag wool which is
291 washed, dyed, and spun in the homes but carded on the mainland. The trousers
294 are brown or grey depending on whether a brown or black weft is combined with
[286] the white warp on the loom; they are called "britches" when styled differently as to seam and hem. Vests also are brown or grey in front with backs dyed blue, and

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are worn over dark colored sweaters or blue woolen pullover shirts. Most sweaters are imported, although some of simple design are knitted by women, and shirts are sewn from wool sold in the shops. Under the outer layer of clothing are worn lightweight grey woolen undershirts, known as "grey shirts," and heavier white woolen—"bawneen"—underpants, called "white drawers." The grey shirt is flannel, but the folk use that term to designate homespun wool. Sometimes a bawneen waistcoat is substituted for the vest, and in the heat of the summer may be worn directly over the undershirt. Making up the remainder of the male costume are the ubiquitous Irish visored cap, imported leather or locally manufactured belts and shoes, and stockings. One of the most time consuming chores of women is knitting and darning stockings for their husbands and children.

Just as the vest is the most striking item of male apparel, the red or blue skirt, or "petticoat," is the most striking female one, in particular the red petticoat when viewed from afar against the dull colors of sand and limestone. The skirt, made from imported wool but dyed locally, is gathered and styled with a deep tuck about nine inches from the bottom, and under this in winter is worn an additional bawneen or red skirt. Sometimes a cotton petticoat and knee length "knickers" also are worn, and several layers of cotton "vests" and shirts provide needed warmth beneath the cotton or lightweight woolen handmade blouse during winter. Blouses are styled alike with collars, long sleeves, and buttons down the front, and usually are of subdued plaid material purchased in the shops. However, somewhat unusual designs and colors are admired, as are brooches worn at the neck of the garment. Black knee length woolen stockings and black leather shoes, both procured in the shops, encase the feet. Over the shoulders may be worn a multi-colored or red island crocheted shawl of small size, called a "shawleen." In winter and when attending church, women wear heavy brown woolen paisley or black shawls outdoors which cover the head. The black shawl can be bought on the mainland, but the paisley shawl is no longer available.

Infants of both sexes until toilet trained are clothed in plain bawneen dresses. Then boys don short pants of varying length made from homespun wool, which are worn with white sweaters or blue shirts. Corduroy trousers and jackets are coming into vogue for everyday wear, but on Sunday the white sweater always is worn. Older boys wear long woolen trousers or britches and blue shirts, and children of all ages go barefoored or put on sandals during the summer and add hand knit stockings in winter. Girls past infancy wear frocks sewn by their mothers, bought in the shops, or sent by relatives from abroad. Whether shoes and stockings are worn depends on the weather, and girls don sweaters and coats over their dresses to afford them protection against the cold. Hairbows provide the only decoration.

Underclothing is changed once a week, and women try to wash clothes that often as well. A man has at least one old and one new vest, trousers, and shirt, and on Sunday and for special events he will wear his newest articles of clothing; the same can be said of women's petticoats and accouterments. Winter and summer attire remains the same for both sexes except that some underclothing is shed during the summer, and at night on retiring outer clothing is removed and some

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underclothing retained. The latter practice reflects extreme modesty as well as the need for warmth. Islanders have an obsessive fear of nakedness which permits them, after infancy, to bathe only their feet, hands, and face and precludes bathing in the sea and the use of bathtubs.

Crafts

Of the several crafts practiced in Inis Beag, only three are strictly income instead of combined subsistence-income activities: the manufacture of *curach* by four men, the mass production of stockings by four girls in the factory at the coast guard station, and the fashioning of miniature canoes by a single man. Sweaters, woven belts, cowhide shoes, and the small multi-colored shawls are made both for local wear and for export. Most of the exported sweaters are sold to a particular mainland firm for resale, as are all of the model canoes, and the factory is sponsored by Gaeltacht Eireann which markets the stockings produced. Other craft commodities are sold by the folk directly to consumers, most of whom are tourists.

The long rowing canoe of Inis Beag is distributed widely along the west coast of Ireland, from Cos. Donegal to Kerry, and its seaworthy qualities as well as the rowing skill of the crews which sail it are renowned. One of a number of varieties of the coracle, which has a heritage extending back to the Mesolithic, it is built of deal and oak lathes and covered with tarred canvas (see Fig 10). Before canvas was introduced, untanned seal, cow, and horse hides were used for covering, and these were reported from a nearby island less than 100 years ago. The *curach* is approximately 20 feet in length, has a high pointed nose, is round bellied and lacks a keel, draws less than 6 inches of water, and is rowed with narrow 10-feet-long oars. These oars are bladeless for use in rough seas and are pivoted on single tholepins rather than in oarlocks. The looms of the oars overlap, so that oarsmen must pull cross-handed, and on long journeys a lug sail is hoisted to relieve the crew. For the neophyte, rowing a *curach* cross-handed in a heavy sea can be even more abusive of the hands than rebuilding a gateway in a stone fence. Most canoes hold three men—are "three-oared"—but two-, four-, and even five-men *curach* were or are used. Loads up to a ton and a half can be accommodated, and trussed asses, sheep, and horses sometimes are transported in them.

Forty-two householders in Inis Beag own three-men canoes, among whom three have additional two-oared *curach*. The craft are stored upside down in "cots" on either side of the strand along the margins of the common land, although Terrace villagers use a small beach along the northeast coast of the island; they are carried between the cots and the water upside down on the shoulders of the crew, and in that position resemble gigantic beetles. Two Inis Beag men are at work building canoes most of the time, and when they are not busy at this task they construct furniture for local sale. Two other men manufacture *curach* occasionally, and another two who once built them have discontinued the practice. No canoe makers are found elsewhere in the region; therefore, Inis Beag artisans serve the

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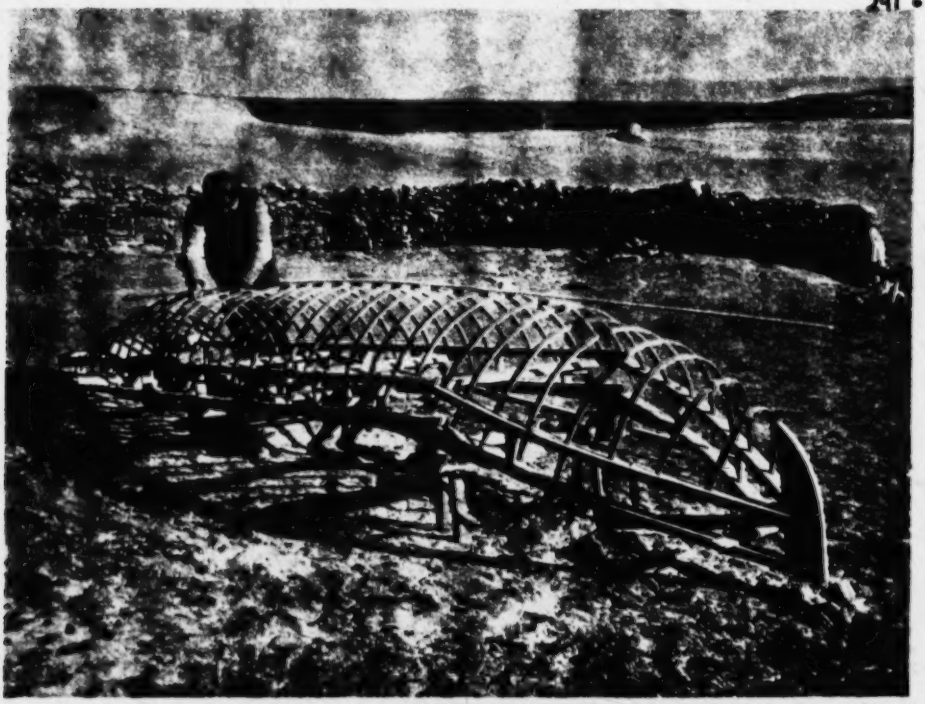

Figure 10. Assembling lathes in the construction of a canoe

folk of neighboring islands as well as mainland seamen for many miles around. A *curach* takes a week of steady work to construct, and the builder is paid 6 pounds for his labor and a shopkeeper 12 pounds for the materials.

The curate blesses a newly manufactured canoe, and a small bottle of holy water is kept in its bow to afford the crew magical protection. Some fishermen seek further spiritual assistance by tipping their caps and making the sign of the cross with salt water before shoving off, especially if they are about to encounter hazardous weather conditions or are to make a long voyage. One of the many omens known to the folk is a "prayer to guide you safely," passed down from the time of St. Patrick, it is claimed, which is uttered by fishermen ready to put out to sea; if two mistakes are made in its recitation, danger is in the offing and the trip is postponed or cancelled. Another sign of impending peril which will cause postponement of a fishing trip is for one of the crew to meet a red-haired woman on the trail as he walks to the strand to embark.

The knit sweater, called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is

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The knit sweater called a "ganzie," is not a traditional item of wear, as is commonly asserted by writers, but was introduced in the 1890s as a cottage industry by the Congested Districts Board, which sent instructors to Inis Beag to teach the women there the manner of knitting the intricate patterns. Only children wear the ganzie, for men always have preferred a dark sweater of simple design which is indigenous to the island. The patterns bear such euphonious names as "crooked road," "figure eight," "double diamond," "rosebud," "honeycomb," and "blackberry," and most of them are common to the rest of Ireland, the British Isles, and other parts of Europe. The term ganzie, in fact, undoubtedly derives from the Channel island, Guernsey. A widely held belief that each Inis Beag family has its own distinctive sweater pattern, comparable to the Scottish tartan, by which its drowned members are identified is unfounded. Seventeen women knit for the mainland company, which supplies them with yarn, and are paid between 2 pounds and 2 pounds and 10 shillings by weight for each sweater. Some are able to knit a ganzie in a week, but others take two or three weeks; one woman made 41 sweaters during 1959. A girl working steadily at the knitting factory can earn slightly more in a week than one knitting a ganzie in that time, but most girls choose to knit sweaters because they can be at home where their task seems less tedious. Some women prefer to sell their sweaters to tourists and can on occasion dispose of a ganzie for as much as 6 pounds, but these women must purchase their own yarn, and marketing is much less secure as tourists seldom come into island homes. At present, the finest ganzies are knitted by women in Co. Donegal, a fact which Inis Beag women admit privately.

The woven belt and cowhide shoes of Inis Beag folk have an ancient heritage, just as has the *curach*. It is not known when the belt, or *crios*, was introduced into Ireland, but it has been worn for centuries by Portuguese seamen. Known as "pampooties," the island style footwear once was worn widely in Ireland, although made from various hides and skins, and a century ago was cut from sealskin in Inis Beag. The term pampootie is of Scandinavian origin, and my wife and I have heard it used among Danish peasants to describe their shoes. Today, a Danish expatriate who has lived in the island for almost a decade supports himself by weaving *crios* on a loom for the folk; he also sells them to visitors and to mainland shops along with woven ties and bookmarks. Although "the Dane" has come to monopolize the production of belts, several women occasionally make them by hand for their menfolk and to sell. The manufacture of *crios* once was largely in the hands of women, and they wore them sewn to their petticoats and tied at the side, but now it is mostly men who wear them. Three yards long and two inches wide, the belt is woven with a multitude of colors and designs and is worn wrapped twice around the body and tucked in at either side of the waist. Elders prefer traditional designs and shun the color green because it is unlucky, but young men are coming to like experimental patterns and all of the basic colors and their many shades. Contrary to popular opinion, there are no family designs. Some persons, however, ask for the same pattern every two or three years when they buy a new *crios* if they believe that it has brought them luck.

Pampooties are favored in Inis Beag because they are ideally suited for wet rocks and frail canoes. The spiked heels of female tourists and visiting emigrants who come ashore in *curach* are viewed with trepidation by crewmen, who are sup-

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ported on the sea only by thin canvas. Most men are able to make pampooties for themselves, but several islanders specialize in the craft and sell their wares to their fellows and to visitors. Usually cured hides are imported from the mainland, and 40 pairs of pampooties can be fashioned from a whole cowhide. They are cut to shape the foot, have the hair outside, are secured front and back by lacing, and when used daily will last about two months. To be pliable, they must be kept moist, so they are dipped in water when they become dry and hardened; however, because they are worn constantly in wet grass and sand, they seldom lose their softness.

In this chapter, I have considered all of the important means of gaining a livelihood in Inis Beag. Some I have discussed at length, while others I have touched on briefly and will reconsider later; but two thus far not referred to—piloting and recovering objects washed ashore—I would like to take up before ending the chapter. Only one pilot remains in the island, but early in the century men of several families guided vessels through the east sound to ports on the mainland. Then it was customary to place lookouts at the high points of Inis Beag to scan the horizon for masts of approaching ships, and often several canoes would race miles out to sea in order to be first to contact a potential customer. The Terrace villager who still plies the trade seldom contacts likely vessels now, and more often than not his services are refused once he rows to a ship, what with modern charts and navigating instruments. Piloting is still very much alive in the memories of the folk, and one of the popular genres of folklore is the humorous anecdote dealing with real and imagined experiences of pilots. One of these concerns a crew fishing in the east sound which was hailed by the captain of a passing schooner. Although not a pilot, an old member of the crew claimed that he was and climbed aboard, and the captain agreed to hire him after he said that he knew the sound and coastline well. Soon after, the ship struck bottom "with a great bump," and the enraged captain shouted, "I thought you said you knew all the rocks in the sound.", to which the islandman replied in a quiet voice, "I did, and that's one of them." The same old man in another tale earns the job by boxing the compass in Gaelic for the captain; the humor of this story lies in the fact that the captain does not know Irish, and the islandman, who in turn does not know the points of the compass, simply recites terms of reference[2] for kin in a rhythmic manner.

One of the oldest of Inis Beag traditions is the "law of wrack"—the right of islanders to confiscate objects of value which have washed ashore. If a person discovers wrack, he establishes ownership by placing a stone atop it or by carrying it above high water mark, and no one else will claim it. Some islanders wander along the shores at dawn seeking what objects may have washed in during the night, especially timber, and those who habitually engage in this pursuit are known disparagingly as "wrack-boomers"—so poor that they must depend on salvage. During the two world wars, the economy of Inis Beag was bolstered by the immense amount of wreckage which drifted in from torpedoed ships, and the islanders still reminisce about particular visitations of flour, planks, and other

[2] See p. 75 for a definition of terms of reference.

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829 passersby, and live more frugally and save more as a result. Gruff, impatient, and
often impolite, they talk rapidly in high pitched voices and shout at their beasts
[273] and at one another from a distance, and on occasion they will use profanity. Inis
Thiar men drink more than Inis Beag men, it is claimed; rather than sipping
slowly and savoring their stout and whiskey, they consume it quickly and are more
concerned with the effects that it produces. It is admitted in Inis Beag that all
Irish are inquisitive and disposed to gossip about their fellows, but islanders to
the west are openly so and will "demand" information from tourists and will
[593] discuss one another quite freely. Braver, "bolder," and less concerned with morality,
men from Inis Thiar rowed to the freighter on several occasions and contested
successfully with local folk for salvage, which caused some Inis Beag wives to
[562] deride their husbands for not possessing these qualities. Women of Inis Thiar also
are thought to be braver and bolder, and remain less in their homes, visit relatives
and acquaintances and the shops more often, and in general participate more in
social events than do their sisters to the east. Despite being extremely critical of
Inis Thiar folk for possessing the above and many other less prominent traits, the
people of Inis Beag grudgingly admit that their neighbors possess greater *esprit*
[167] *de corps* and enjoy life more than themselves. Once a person emigrates from Inis
Beag, he or she seldom returns; but Inis Thiar emigrants are "clever" and do well
abroad, and often return with earnings to remain at home, especially women who
come back with "fortunes" to seek husbands.

829 The attitudes of islanders toward those living on the mainland—"towns-
186 people" or "city folk"—reveal a primitivistic bias which probably can be traced
[121] back to the Viking occupation, when towns first were established in Ireland and
primitive Celts became transformed into peasants: "that primitive people retain
a morality which civilized people tend to lose; that a man's moral worth declines
in rough proportion to his distance from the soil; that civilization must be held
accountable for man's noteworthy catalogue of vices;" (Ardrey 1961:147–148).
Inis Beag folk regard themselves as impeccably moral and mainlanders, although
fellow Catholics, as immoral; yet the "progressiveness" of the latter is envied
secretly and gives rise to the sensitivity of islanders to the real and imagined
denigration of them by mainlanders for their backwardness. Mainland Irish are
• [291] thought to be overly pecuniary, dishonest, rude, and promiscuous. When visiting
towns and cities on the mainland, Inis Beag people for many years have worn main-
land attire so as not to be singled out and ridiculed. They are ashamed of their
English speech—even though adults speak the tongue with greater proficiency
than many urban dwellers—and believe that they are prey to dishonest shopkeepers,
[123] who are ever ready to take advantage of their ignorance and naiveté. Whenever
my wife and I paid short visits to a nearby port or to Dublin, we were requested by
islanders to make purchases, have repairs made under our name, and transact other
business for them because we were "too clever to be cheated." Once in the city, the
folk miss Inis Beag with its clear air and broad expanses, and they complain of
the tall buildings (seldom more than four stories high) which "press in" on them,
the bustle of the main street, the curious stares of townspeople, and the dirtiness
of buildings and roads. In claiming that few islanders would prefer to live there

16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
(1959-1960) Inis Beag

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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16:Messenger E-4,5 (1955-1966) 1969 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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feel that sexual intercourse is debilitating, and they will desist from it the night before they are to perform tasks which will require the expenditure of great energy. Women are approached sexually neither during menstruation nor for at least six months after childbirth, for they are considered "dangerous" to the male at these times. Returned Yanks have been denounced from the pulpit for describing American sexual mores to local youths, and such "pornographic" magazines as *Time* and *Life*, mailed home by relatives from abroad, have aroused curates to spirited sermon and instruction.

Male masturbation seems to be common in Inis Beag (sometimes called the major "escape valve" for frustration in Ireland), but premarital coitus is unknown and marital copulation is limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. Elders proudly insist that premarital sexual activities of any sort do not occur in the island, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the bolder of them kiss and handle outside of their clothing. Inis Beag girls, it is held by their lovers, do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact; the male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the curate. Absolute privacy at night is sought by married couples when they copulate, and foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body of the woman, especially her buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband, and the wife is usually totally passive. Only the male superior position is employed, and intercourse takes place with underclothes not fully removed; orgasm for the man is achieved quickly, after which he falls asleep almost immediately. Whenever I talked with males of sexual practices other than those just described, my remarks were met with disbelief, or I was accused of "codding" my listeners.

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies, such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. We have noted elsewhere the fear of nudity—which precludes washing the body and bathing in the sea—and the secrecy surrounding the acts of urination and defecation and the use of human manure as fertilizer and cow dung as fuel. The sexual symbolism of nudity not only has resulted in the drowning of seamen who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, but in the death of men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might mean baring their bodies to her, and thus were beyond help when finally treated. An island nurse confided to me that she was physically assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness in the mother's absence and bathing his chest as the woman entered his bedroom. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, especially when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some cottages, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this behavior outside when unobserved.

Hypochondria and depression in Inis Beag are inextricably linked, in that the former composes part of the syndrome of the latter; and just as sexual puritanism is undergirded by masochism, so are these two traits. Little more need be said about the causes of depression among the folk, other than to bring together factors which have been discussed earlier: the extent to which their lives are circumscribed by the will of the priest and other figures of authority; their poverty

17: Messenger E-4,5 (1958-1966)1971 ER6 Rural Irish ER6
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recess play and movement to and from school. During church services, there is a further separation of adult men and women, as well as boys and girls, and each of the four groups leaves the chapel in its turn. The pubs are frequented only by men or by women tourists and female teachers who have spent several years on the mainland while training and thus are "set apart" (and, of course, by inquisitive female ethnographers). Women occasionally visit the shops to procure groceries, but it is more common for them to send their children to do so, since supplies and drinks are proffered across the same counter, and men are usually to be found on the premises. Even on the strand during summer months, male tourists tend to bathe at one end and women at the other. Some swimmers "daringly" change into bathing suits there, under towels and dresses—a custom practiced elsewhere in Ireland which has overtones of sexual catharsis.

It is often asserted that the major "escape valve" of sexual frustration among single persons in Ireland is masturbation; frustration-aggression theorists, however, would stress the ubiquity of drinking, alcoholism, disputes, and pugnacity as alternative outlets. Pugnacity can also be linked to the widespread problem of male identity. Our study revealed that male masturbation in Inis Beag seems to be common, premarital coitus unknown, and marital copulation limited as to foreplay and the manner of consummation. My wife and I never witnessed courting—"walking out"—in the island. Elders proudly insist that it does not occur, but male youths admit to it in rumor. The claims of young men focus on "petting" with tourists and a few local girls, whom the "bolder" of them kiss and fondle outside of their clothing. Island girls, it is held by their "lovers," do not confess these sins because they fail to experience pleasure from the contact. The male perpetrators also shun the confessional because of their fear of the priest.

We were unable to determine the frequency of marital coitus. A considerable amount of evidence indicates that privacy in the act is stressed and that foreplay is limited to kissing and rough fondling of the lower body, especially the buttocks. Sexual activity invariably is initiated by the husband. Only the male superior position is employed; intercourse takes place with underclothes not removed; and orgasm, for the man, is achieved quickly, almost immediately after which he falls asleep. (I must stress the provisional nature of these data, for they are based on a limited sample of respondents and relate to that area of sexual behavior least freely discussed.)

Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies,

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Many kinds of behavior disassociated from sex in other societies such as nudity and physiological evacuation, are considered sexual in Inis Beag. Nudity is abhorred by the islanders, and the consequences of this attitude are numerous and significant for health and survival. Only infants have their entire bodies sponged once a week, on Saturday night; children, adolescents, and adults, on the same night, wash only their faces, necks, lower arms, hands, lower legs, and feet. Several times my wife and I created intense embarrassment by entering a room in which a man had just finished his weekly ablutions and was barefooted; once when this occurred, the man hurriedly pulled on his stockings and said with obvious relief, "Sure, it's good to get your clothes on again." Clothing always is changed in private, sometimes within the secrecy of the bedcovers, and it is usual for the islanders to sleep in their underclothes.

Despite the fact that Inis Beag men spend much of their time at sea in their canoes, as far as we could determine none of them can swim. Four rationales are given for this deficiency: the men are confident that nothing will happen to them, because they are excellent seamen and weather forecasters; a man who cannot swim will be more careful; it is best to drown immediately when a canoe capsizes far out in the ocean rather than swim futilely for minutes or even hours, thus prolonging the agony; and, finally, "When death is on a man, he can't be saved." The truth of the matter is that they have never dared to bare their bodies in order to learn the skill. Some women claim to have "bathed" at the back of the island during the heat of summer, but this means wading in small pools with skirts held knee-high, in complete privacy. Even the nudity of household pets can arouse anxiety, particularly when they are sexually aroused during time of heat. In some homes, dogs are whipped for licking their genitals and soon learn to indulge in this practice outdoors. My wife, who can perform Irish step-dances and sing many of the popular folk songs, was once requested to sing a seldom-heard American Western ballad; she chose "The Lavendar Cowboy," who "had only two hairs on his chest." The audience response was perfunctory and, needless to say, she never again was "called out" to sing that particular song.

The drowning of seamen, who might have saved themselves had they been able to swim, is not the only result of the sexual symbolism of nudity; men who were unwilling to face the nurse when ill, because it might have meant baring their bodies to her, were beyond help when finally treated. While my wife and I were on the island, a nurse was assaulted by the mother of a young man for diagnosing his illness and

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bathing his chest in the mother's absence. (In this case, Oedipal and sexual attitudes probably were at work in tandem.)

It must be pointed out that nudity is also shunned for "health" reasons, for another obtrusive Inis Beag character trait is hypochondria. In some cases, however, it is hard to determine whether concern with modesty or health is dominant in a particular behavioral response. Fear of colds and influenza is foremost among health concerns; rheumatism and related muscular joint ailments, migraine headaches and other psychosomatic disorders, tooth decay, indigestion ("nervous stomach"), and hypermetropia are other widespread pathologies which cause worry among the folk—not to mention those of supernatural origin.

Secrecy surrounds the acts of urination and defecation. The evacuation of infants before siblings and strangers is discouraged, and animals that discharge in the house are driven out. Chickens that habitually "dirty" their nests while setting are soon killed and eaten. Although some women drink spirits privately, they seldom do so at parties. In part this is because of the embarrassment involved in visiting the outside toilet with men in the "street" looking on. One of the most carefully guarded secrets of Inis Beag, unreported in the many works describing island culture, is the use of human manure mixed with sand as a fertilizer. We were on the island eight months before we discovered that compost is not "street drippings" and "scraw," but decomposed feces. With "turf" becoming more difficult to procure from the mainland, some islanders have taken to importing coal and processed peat and burning cattle dung. The dung is prepared for use in difficult-to-reach plots at the back of the island when tourists are few in number; it is burned covertly because of the overtones of sex and poverty. Another custom that my wife and I learned of late in our research, due to the secrecy surrounding it, concerns the thickening of wool; men are required to urinate in a container and tread the wool therein with their bare feet.

Other major manifestations of sexual repression in Inis Beag are the lack of a "dirty joke" tradition (at least as the term is understood by ethnologists and folklorists) and the style of dancing, which allows little bodily contact among participants. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendoes, puns, and asides—that they believed bore sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they were pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an island bachelor arising late in the day after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate"; this is